اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا

Quran English Translation and Tafseer
Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi
Surah 108 – Al- Kauthar (The Abundance)

سُوْرَةُ الْكَوْثَرِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

(In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate)

اِنَّآ اَعْطَيْنٰكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ۝١

(108:1) (O Prophet), We have surely bestowed upon you good in abundance. (1)

(1) The full meaning of the word kauthar, as used here, cannot perhaps be expressed in one word in any language of the world. This is an intensive form of the noun kathrat which literally means abundance, but the context in which it has been used does not give the meaning of mere abundance but abundance of good, of spiritual benefits and blessings, and of such abundance which is unbounded and limitless, and it does not imply any one good or benefit or blessing but abundance of countless benefits and blessings.

Have a look again at the background of this Surah given in the Introduction. The enemies thought that Muhammad (peace be upon him) had been completely ruined: he was cut off from the community and had become utterly helpless and powerless; his trade was ruined; his male children who could perpetuate his name were dead; the message that he presented was such that except for a handful of the people no one in entire Arabia, not to speak of Makkah, was prepared to listen to it. Therefore, failure and disappointment would be his lot as long as he lived and there would be no one in posterity to remember him when he died. Under such conditions when Allah said: We have granted you the Kauthar, this by itself gave the meaning: Your foolish opponents think that you are ruined and deprived of the good things that you enjoyed before Prophethood, but the fact is that We have favored you with unbounded good and countless blessings. This included the matchless moral qualities which the Prophet (peace be upon

him) was blessed with; this included the great blessings of Prophethood and the Quran, the knowledge and wisdom that were granted to him; this included the blessing of Tauhid and also of such a system of life whose simple and intelligible, rational and natural, and comprehensive principles had the potential to spread throughout the world and of continuing to spread forever afterwards. This also included the blessing of the exaltation of renown because of which the Prophet's (peace be upon him) blessed name continues to be exalted throughout the world since 1400 years and will continue to be so exalted till Resurrection.

This also included the blessing that by his preaching eventually such a world-wide community came into being, which became the standard-bearer of truth in the world forever, which can claim to have produced the greatest number of the pious, virtuous and noble character people in any one nation, and which even when corrupted and deprived has the highest good in it as against every other nation of the world. This also included the blessing that the Prophet (peace be upon him) during his very lifetime witnessed his invitation and message attaining to the highest success and the preparation of a community which had the power to dominate the world. This also included the blessing that although on his being deprived of the male offspring the enemies thought he would be lost to posterity, yet Allah not only blessed him with the spiritual offspring in the form of Muslims, who will continue to exalt his name in the world till Resurrection but also granted him from his one daughter, Fatimah, the natural progeny, who have spread throughout world and whose only mark of distinction and pride is that they trace their descent from him.

These are the blessings which the people have seen and witnessed as to how abundantly Allah has blessed His Prophet (peace be upon him) within the world. In addition, Kauthar also implies two other great blessings which Allah will bestow on him in the Hereafter. We had no means of knowing these; therefore the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself gave us news of them, and told us that Kauthar also implied them. First, the Fountain of Kauthar, which he will be granted on the Resurrection Day in the Plain of Assembly; second, the River Kauthar, which he will be

granted in Paradise. About both such a large number of the Ahadith have been reported from him through such a large number of the reporters that there remains no doubt about their authenticity.

What the Prophet (peace be upon him) said about the Fountain of Kauthar is as follows:

(1) This Fountain will be granted to him on the Resurrection Day when there will be the cry of al-atash, alatash (thirst, thirst!) on every side. The Prophet's (peace be upon him) community will gather together before him at it and will be watered thereby. He himself will be the first to arrive at it and will be occupying the central position.
He has said: This is a Fountain at which my Ummah will assemble on the Resurrection Day. (Muslim: Kitab as-Salat Abu Daud: Kitab as-Sunnah). I shall have arrived at the Fountain before you. (Bukhari: Kitab ar-Riqaq and Kitab al- Fitan; Muslim: Kitab al-Fidail and Kitab at-Taharah; lbn Majah: Kitab al Manasik and Kitab az-Zuhd. Musnad Ahmad: Marwiyyat Abdullah bin Masud, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abu Hurairah).

I shall be there before you and shall bear witness on you, and by God, I am seeing my Fountain even at this time. (Bukhari: Kitab al-jana-iz Kitab al- Maghazi, Kitab ar-Riqaq).

Addressing an assembly of the Ansar, the Prophet (peace be upon him) once said: After me you will meet with selfishness and nepotism, endure it patiently until you meet me at the Fountain. (Bukhari: Kitab Manaqib al-Ansar and Kitab al-Maghazi; Muslim: Kitab al-Iman; Tirmidhi: Kitab al-Fitan).

I shall be near the middle of the Fountain on the Resurrection Day. (Muslim: Kitab al-Fadail).

Abu Barzah Aslami was asked: Have you heard something about the Fountain from the Prophet (peace be upon him). He replied: Not once, or twice, or thrice, or four or five times, but

over and over again. May Allah deprive of its water the one who belies it. (Abu Daud: Kitab as-Sunnah).
Ubaidullah bin Ziyad thought that the traditions about the Fountain were false; so much so that he belied all the traditions reported by Abu Barzah Aslami, Bara bin Aazib and Aaidh bin Amr. At last, Abu Sabrah brought out a writing which he had written down after hearing it from Abdullah bin Amr bin alAas, and it contained this saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): Beware! Your place of meeting me will be my Fountain. (Musnad Ahmad: Marwiyyat Abdullah bin Amr bin alAas).

(2) Different dimensions of the Fountain have been given in different traditions, but according to a large number of the traditions it will extend from Aylah (the present Israeli seaport of Ilat) to Sana'a of Yaman, or from Aylah to Adan, or from Amman to Adan in length, and from Aylah to Juhfah (a place between Jeddah and Rabigh) in breadth. (Bukhari: Kitab ar-Riqaq; Abu Daud at Tayalisi: Hadith No. 995; Musnad Ahmad: Marwiyyat Abu Bakr Siddiq and Abdullah bin Umar; Muslim: Kitab at-Taharah and Kitab al-Fadail; Tirmidhi Abwab Sifat al-Qiyamah; Ibn Majah: Kitab az-Zuhd). From this it appears that on the Resurrection Day the present Red Sea itself will be turned into the Fountain of Kauthar. And the correct knowledge is only with Allah.

(3) About this Fountain the Prophet (peace be upon him) has told us that water will be supplied to it from the River Kauthar of Paradise (which is being mentioned below). Two channels from Paradise will flow into it and supply water to it. (Muslim: Kitab al-Fadail). According to another tradition: A canal from the River Kauthar of Paradise will be opened towards this Fountain. (Musnad Ahmad; Marwiyyat Abdullah bin Masud).

(4) According to the description of it given by the Prophet (peace be upon him) its water will be whiter than milk (according to other traditions whiter than silver, and according to still others, whiter than snow), cooler than snow, sweeter than honey; the earth of its bed will be more fragrant than musk; the water jugs set at it will be as numerous as the stars in the sky; the one who drinks from it would never thirst; and the one who is deprived of it will never have his thirst satisfied. These things with a little variation in wording have been reported in numerous Ahadith (Bukhari: Kitab ar-Riqaq; Muslim: Kitab at- Taharah and Kitab al-Fadail; Musnad

Ahmad: Marwiyyat Ibn Masud, Ibn Umar, Abdullah bin Amr bin alAas; Tirmidhi: Abwab Sifat al-Qiyanmah: Ibn Majah: Kitab az- Zuhd; Abu Daud: Tayalisi, Ahadith No. 995, 2135).

(5) Concerning it the Prophet (peace be upon him) warned the people of his time again and again, saying: After me those from among you who would effect changes in my way, will be removed from the Fountain and will be disallowed to approach it. I shall say: they are my companions, but it will be said: Don't you know what they did after you? Then I too shall discard them and tell them to keep away. This subject has been expressed in many traditions. (Bukhari: Kitab ar-Rigaq, Kitab al-Fitan; Muslim: Kitab at-Tahara and Kitab al-Fadail Musnad Ahmad: Marwiyyat Ibn Masud, Abu Hurairah; Ibn Majah: Kitab al-Manasik. The Hadith which Ibn Majah has related in this connection contains very pathetic words. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Beware! I shall have arrived at the Fountain before you and shall pride myself by your means upon the greater numbers of my Ummah as against other ummahas. Do not at that time cause my face to be blackened. Beware! I shall have some people released, and some people shall be separated from me. I shall say: O my Lord, they are my companions. He will reply: Don't you know what innovations they introduced after you? According to Ibn Majah, these words were said by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his Sermon at Arafat.

(6) Likewise, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has also warned the Muslims coming after him till Resurrection, saying: Whoever from among you will swerve from my way and effect changes in it, will be removed from the Fountain. I shall say: O Lord, they belong to me, they are the people of my Ummah. In response it will be said: Don't you know what changes they effected after you and then turned back on their heels? Then I shall also turn them away and shall not allow them to approach the Fountain. Many traditions on this subject are found in the Hadith. (Bukhari: Kitab al- Musaqat, Kitab ar-Riqaq, Kitab al-Fitan; Muslim: Kitab at- Taharah. Katab as-Salat, Kitab al-Fadail; Ibn Majah: Kitab az-Zuhd; Musnad Ahmad: Marwiyyat Ibn Abbas).

Traditions about this Fountain have been related by more than 50 companions, and the earlier scholars generally have taken it to mean the Fountain of Kauthar. Imam Bukhari has named the last chapter of his Kitab ar-Riqaq as Babun fil hawd wa

qual-Allahu inna a tainak al-Kauthar, and in a tradition from Anas there is the explanation that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said about Kauthar: It is a Fountain at which my Ummah shall alight.

The River Kauthar which the Prophet (peace be upon him) shall be granted in Paradise, also has been mentioned in a large number of the traditions of Hadith. Many traditions have been related on the authority of Anas in which he says, and in some he explains that he is reporting the exact words of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself, that on the occasion of miraj; the Prophet (peace be upon him) was taken round Paradise and shown a river on the banks of which there were vaults of pearls or precious stones carved from within; the earth of its bed was of the strong-scented musk. He asked Gabriel, or the angel who took him round, what it was? He replied that it was the River Kauthar, which Allah had granted him. (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Abu Daud Tayalisi, Ibn Jarir) Again, according to Anas, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked (or a person asked him): What is the Kauthar? He replied; It is a River which Allah has granted me in Paradise. Its earth is musk: its water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey. (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, lbn Jarir; according to another tradition of Musnad Ahmad, describing the merits of the River Kauthar the Prophet said that at its bottom there are pearls instead of pebbles. Ibn Umar says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The Kauthar is a river in Paradise the banks of which are golden; it flows on pearls and diamonds (i.e. its bed has diamonds instead of pebbles); its earth smells sweeter than musk; its water is whiter than milk (or snow), cooler than snow and sweeter than honey.” (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Ibn Abi Hatim, Darimi, Abu Daud Tayalisi, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah, Ibn Abi Shaibah). Usamah bin Zaid says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) once went to visit Usamah; he was not at home; his wife entertained him and during the conversation said My husband has told me that you have been granted a river in Paradise, which is called the Kauthar. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Yes, and its bed is of rubies and corals and emeralds and pearls. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Marduyah. Though the sanad of this tradition is weak,

the presence of a large number of traditions dealing with this subject strengthens it). Besides these marfu traditions, a great many sayings of the companions and their successors have been related in the Hadith to the effect that the Kauthar implies a river in Paradise. These traditions describe its qualities as have been mentioned above. For instance, the sayings of Abdullah bin Umar, Abdullah bin Abbas, Anas bin Malik, Aishah, Mujahid and Abul Aliyah are found in Musnad Ahmad, Bukhari, Tirmidhi, Nasai; and the books of Ibn Marduyah, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Shaibah and other traditionists.

فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّکَ وَ انْحَرْ ؕ﴿۲﴾

(108-2) So offer Prayer and sacrifice (2) to your Lord alone.

(2) Different commentaries of it have been reported from different scholars. Some of them take the Prayer to mean the five times obligatory Prayer (salat); some take it to imply the Prayer of Id al-Adha, and some say that it implies the Prayer itself. Likewise, the meaning of wanhar and sacrifice according to some illustrious scholars, is to place the right hand over the left hand and to fold them on the chest in the Prayer; some say that it implies raising both hands with Allahu Akbar at the commencement of the Prayer; some say that it implies raising both hands at the commencement of the Prayer, at bowing for Ruku and after rising from Ruku; and some say that it means performing the Id al-Adha Prayer and then offering the animal sacrifice. But if the context in which this command has been enjoined, is considered, its meaning clearly seems to be: O Prophet, when your Lord has granted you so many and so splendid blessings, then you should perform the Prayer only for His sake and offer sacrifice only for His sake. This command was given in the environment when not only the pagans of Quraish but the pagans of entire Arabia and the world worshipped their self-made gods and offered sacrifices at their shrines. Therefore, the intention of the command is: Contrary to the polytheistic practice, you should remain steadfast to your creed: your Prayer is only for Allah and your sacrifice is also for Him alone, as it has been said at another place: Declare,

O Prophet, my salat and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah, Lord of the universe, Who has no partner with Him. This is what I have been enjoined, and I am the first to surrender to Him. (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 162-163). This same meaning has been explained of it by Ibn Abbas. Ata, Mujahid, Ikrimah, Hasan Basri, Qatadah, Muhammad bin Kaab al-Qurzi, Dahhak, Rabi bin Anas, Ata al-Khurasani and many other major commentators. (Ibn Jarir). However, this by itself is correct that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) enforced by Allah's command the practice of the Id al-Adha Prayer and the offering of animal sacrifice at Al-Madinah, he himself gave the first place to the Prayer (salat and the second to the sacrifice, as commanded in the verses: Inna salati wa nusuki and fa-salli li-Rabbika wanhar, and also enjoined on the Muslims to do the same, i.e. they should first perform the Prayer and then offer the sacrifice. This is neither the explanation of this verse nor the occasion of its revelation but a deduction made by the Prophet (peace be upon him) from these verses and his deduction of injunctions is also a kind of divine inspiration.

اِنَّ شَانِئَکَ ۫ هُوَ الۡاَبۡتَرُ ۝٣

(108:3) Verily your enemy (3) alone has been cut off from the roots. (4)

(3) The word shani as used, in the original is derived from shaan, which means the hatred and spite because of which a person may start ill-treating another. At another place in the Quran it has been said: (And O Muslims,) the enmity of any people should not so provoke you as to turn you away from justice. (Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 8). Thus, shani aka implies every such person who blinded by his enmity of the Prophet (peace be upon him) should bring false accusations against him, slander and defame him and vent his personal spite against him by taunting and scoffing at him in every possible way.

(4) Huwal abtar: He himself is abtar, i.e. though he calls you abtar, he in fact himself is abtar. Some explanations of abtar have already been given in the Introduction to the Surah. It is derived

from batar which means to cut off, but idiomatically it is used in a comprehensive meaning. In the Hadith, the rakah of the Prayer which is not coupled with another rakah is called butaira, i.e. the lonely rakah. According to another Hadith, every piece of work, which is in any way important, is abtar if it is started without the glorification and praise of Allah implying that it is cut off from the root; it has no stability; and it is doomed to failure. A man who fails to achieve his object is abtar as also the one who is deprived of all means and resources. A person who is left with no hope of any good and success in life is also abtar. A person who has been cut off from his family, brotherhood, associates and helpers is also abtar. The word abtar is also used for the man who has no male child, or whose male child or children have died, for after him there remains no one to remember him and he is lost to posterity after death. In almost all these meanings the disbelieving Quraish called the Prophet (peace be upon him) abtar. At this, Allah said: O Prophet, not you but your enemies are abtar. This was not merely a reprisal, but a prophecy out of the most important prophecies of the Quran, which literally proved true. When it was made, the people regarded the Prophet (peace be upon him) as abtar, and no one could imagine how the big chiefs of the Quraish would become abtar, who were famous not only in Makkah but throughout Arabia, who were successful in life, rich in worldly wealth and children, who had their associates and helpers everywhere in the country, who enjoyed intimate relations with all the Arabian tribes, being monopolists in trade and managers of Hajj. But not long afterwards the conditions altogether changed. There was a time when on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench (A.H. 5) the Quraish had invaded Al-Madinah with the help of many Arabian and Jewish tribes, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) being besieged had to resist the enemy by digging a trench around the city. After only three years, in A.H. 8, when he attacked Makkah, the Quraish had no helper and they had to surrender helplessly. After this within a year or so the whole Arabia came under his control, deputations of tribes from all over the country began to visit him to take the oaths of allegiance and his enemies were left utterly helpless and resource-less. Then they were so lost to posterity that even if their children survived, none of them today knows that he is a descendent of Abu Jahl,

Abu Lahab, Aas bin Wail, or Uqbah bin Abi Muait, the enemies of Islam, and even if he knows it, he is not prepared to claim that his ancestors were those people. On the contrary, blessings are being invoked on the children of the Prophet (peace be upon him) throughout the world; millions and millions of Muslims take pride in bearing relationship to him; hundreds of thousands of people regard it as a mark of honor and prestige to have descended not only from him but from his family and even the families of his companions. Thus, some one is a Sayyid, another an Alavi, and Abbasi, a Hashmi, a Siddiqi, a Faruqi, an Uthmani, a Zubairi, or an Ansari, but no one is an Abu Jahli or Abu Lahabi. History has proved that not the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) but his enemies were, and are, abtar.